

MINUTES OF BEAN ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

held on Monday 14th April 2025 at 7 pm

at the Bean Village Hall, Bean

Councillors present: Cllr. K Turner-Burgin (Chair)
Cllr. K Clarke
Cllr. D Hammock
Cllr. J Turner-Burgin
Cllr. Mrs SA Weeks
Cllr. Mrs TD Williams

There were no members of the public present.

1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr. Munday

2) Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 8th April 2024

The Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 8th April 2024 were confirmed as a true record and duly signed.

3) Accounting and Governance Statements

The Accounting and Governance Statements of Bean Parish Council for the year ending 31st March 2024 together with the Income and Expenditure account was presented.

It was noted that these accounts had been examined and approved by the Council's internal auditor and that the Annual Return was reviewed by the Parish Council's external auditor under the Audit Commission Act 1998 and a Certificate awarded.

4) Matters Arising from the Financial Statement

There were no questions

5) Chairman's Report

This year, this council secured a new lease of 20 years with Tarmac for Beacon Wood Country Park, this runs from the 1st January 2023 until 31st December 2042, with a break date of 1st January 2033. A new management plan has been developed and agreed with funding secured via a grant from Dartford Borough Council's CIL fund to help to repair hardstanding paths, dipping platform, board walk, access steps, drainage and gulleys and lower woodland track. Also, the installation of interpretation boards and additional signage. Work to start April/May 2025.

A new website <https://www.beaconwoodcountrypark.uk> and dedicated email address beaconwoodcountrypark@beanparishcouncil.gov.uk has also been created for the country park.

A car park management system has also been introduced in the country park operated by Ringo, visitors are asked to pay £1 for two hours and £2 thereafter failure to pay will result in a penalty charge notice being issued to the vehicle keeper, this will now guarantee an income for the country park. This commenced on the 1st February 2025 and is already proving successful.

With continual vandalism of the fencing behind the goal mouth in the recreation ground this council resolved to replace this fencing which has now been completed. As well as the regular routine inspection, repair and maintenance of the equipment within the recreation ground the vegetation along the fence line adjacent to number one Annie Cottage has been removed.

Since September 2024 the council has contracted TMS Protection to close and secure both the recreation ground and the Country Park which has been successful and means that additional cover is no longer required during periods where the caretaker is taking leave.

New kitchen appliances have been purchased for the village hall, as well as ongoing maintenance to continue to improve the hall and maintain it wildlife free, following the recent mouse and squirrel visitors.

A new wooden shed was purchased for the hall garden which is now in situ and is a great replacement for the previous metal sheds. The new shed is nicely painted so that it fits in with the surroundings and is 20' X 6' in dimension.

In October this council was informed that we would be losing our community warden, due to this and a lack of volunteers the Bean Together group closed its doors in December 2024

On the 27th June Highways installed an automatic traffic count on Southfleet Road for a period of 7 days. This not only registered the number of vehicles passing but also their speed, we are now working with Highways to look at measures to help reduce the speed of vehicles through the village.

Sandy Lane gate had a new padlock installed which then disappeared and was replaced, this was then vandalised and replaced. Following this a grinder was used to remove the hinges and the gate removed in its entirety. Vehicles were then known to have regularly used the track and underpass to access Watling Street. Following discussions with Highways it was agreed that concrete 'Lego' blocks be placed on the northside of the underpass and new no-through road signage placed at the junction with School Lane. Council will look to replace the gate, to prevent fly-tipping in the new financial year.

A Remembrance Day service took place at the memorial on the 10th November and Santa visited on the 22nd December. The council continue to purchase dog poo bags and disperse them around the village in home-made dispensers, for those who have forgotten their own to use.

The council has signed the Civility and Respect Pledge and are members of the following Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, Kent Association of Local Councils, Rural Services Partnership.

We have also taken part in the following consultations as a council

- consultation seeking views on introducing remote attendance and proxy voting in local authority meetings in England.
- Kent Fire & Rescue services
- Kent Police Crime Plan
- Borough Wide Nuisance Vehicle Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)
- Government Consultation: 'Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England'
- Council contributed to Community Safety Partnerships annual audit of crime and disorder
- A229 Blue Bell Hill Improvement Scheme Public Consultation

I would like to thank the councillors for all their hard work and dedication over the last 12 months. I would ask that this council extends a huge gratitude and thanks to the Clerk who works tirelessly to ensure this council can execute and discharge its powers lawfully and with equity

Keith Turner-Burgin
Chair of Bean Parish Council

6) **Questions on the Chair's Report**

There were no questions.

7) **Vote of thanks**

The Chair was thanked for his detailed report.

Cllr. Hammock, seconded by Cllr. Weeks proposed a vote of thanks to Cllr Turner-Burgin for his report and the motion was carried unanimously.

8) **Comments or questions to the Parish Council from members of the public**

There were no questions.

9) **Community Reports**

Bean Residents' Association

This report covers the 12 months April 2024 to March 2025.

1. In 2024/25 we held 10 Meetings in the Village Hall; [No meetings Bank Holidays 1st April 23 and 6th May]. There were 113 items of outgoing Correspondence compared with 214 last year. [Exchanges on A2 Works reduced following the £112m scheme opening to traffic on 30 June 2022]. The top recipients were Meeting Invitees (40%), EDC (17%), DBC (12%), Bean Parish Council (11%), KCC (9%), and National Highways (4%).

Main Issue was loss of Pharmacy at Bean that we blamed on EDC who blamed NHS rules; Delmergate Pharmacy is just within 1 mile of Bean (as crow flies), but 4 miles by road.

Meetings and other Correspondence included: -

2. a) A2 Bean and Ebbsfleet Junction Complaints. Safety Audit report delay.

b) Vision Homes insecure Site Hoarding in Beacon Drive. repaired after intervention of Cllr Hammock and visit by Samantha Neale of DBC.

c) Monthly Litter Picking Volunteers, co-ordinated by Jim Conway, collected 125 full bags in 12 months for DBC to collect. Bean RA paid £125.79 for Insurance of Volunteers. EDC mentioned grants in Garden City provided by Clarion Housing Association. However, do they manage any Bean properties?

3. Revised C1 bus service well used off-peak. Complaints continue, but KCC say it was only intended for off-peak use, not for journeys to school or work.

4. Gypsy, Traveller & Travelling Showpeople have not complied with condition to return Bean farmland to pre-occupation condition. DBC Enforcement chasing.

5. Ebbsfleet Garden City; Questions put to every EDC Board Meeting. Still no on-site GP for 4,814 homes completed [29th Jan 2025] (about 11,550 residents).

6. Bean Triangle; EDC considering action on developments without planning applications.

7. The Ship, Green St Green; work progressing, but traffic hazards on skew junction not addressed and are Darenth Parish Council still minded to stop use of their link road?

8. Lower Thames Crossing; Inspectorate approval, but finance to be agreed.

9. Bean 20mph zone; KCC say it is self-enforcing, but speed checks proposed?

10. Visibility splay at Royal Oak Mews not provided. Unresolved since Aug-2021.

This is only a selection of our activity on behalf of Residents and Businesses.

We thank the Committee, Residents and Parish Council for their assistance.

Russell Joyce, Chairman, Bean Residents Association

Bean Allotment Association

Currently we have 28 plot holders and one person on the waiting list. As reported before the row of plots beside the public footpath are no longer considered viable to rent out as they are over shadowed by the trees whose roots extend into the plots. We are also concerned over the large Oak tree on the neighbouring property which over hangs plot 16, covering it with acorns.

During the year the neighbouring property has replaced the picket fence between them and the allotment with a new 6-foot-high panel fence which is a vast improvement.

A small working party has improved the top pathway by levelling it and covering it with woodchip. We were lucky to find a free source of woodchip as it took over 100 bags to complete.

Most plots are ready for spring planting although one tenant has not been seen since before the winter and will need to do considerable work on his plot to pass the independent inspection scheduled for 19 April.

The Association is now registered with HMRC as a Trust

Jim Conway
Chairman.

Friends of Beacon Woods

Overview:

Over the past year, persistent wet weather has continued to impact Beacon Woods. The woodland track and many of the metalled paths have deteriorated significantly, with extensive areas of mud and standing water making access difficult in places.

Visitor Contributions & Parking System:

Unfortunately, visitor contributions to the park's upkeep have declined again this year. As a result, and due to growing financial pressures, the Parish Council introduced a RingGo parking system in February. While this change has met with some initial resistance, we understand it has led to a substantial increase in park-related income.

Park Improvements:

We are pleased to report that the Parish Council successfully secured a grant from Dartford Borough Council for vital park improvements. Planned works, which are hoped to start April/May include:

- Repairs to hardstanding paths and associated drainage gullies
- Replacement of the dipping platform and boardwalks
- Refurbishment of steps within the woodland area and the access path from the village
- Installation of new interpretation boards and additional signage

These enhancements will significantly improve accessibility and the overall visitor experience.

Volunteers & Daily Operations:

We remain very grateful to the volunteers who continue to support the park by opening it daily and helping with litter picking. However, active membership has dropped considerably since the COVID-19 pandemic. To assist with daily operations, the Parish Council arranged for a private company to lock the park each evening—previously a task managed solely by our long-serving Chairman, to whom we owe our sincere thanks.

Leadership Changes & Call for Volunteers:

Both the Chairman and Treasurer will be stepping down at this year's AGM, which will be held on Monday, 19th May at 7:00 PM at the Village Hall. The continuation of Friends of Beacon Woods depends on the recruitment of new members.

We urgently need a volunteer Chair/Work Co-ordinator to oversee general park management duties, including:

- Path maintenance and trimming
- Litter picking and bin emptying
- Organising volunteer efforts

Training in the use of equipment such as strimmers and chainsaws can be provided.

Closing Note:

Beacon Woods is a beautiful natural space, particularly cherished amid the ongoing local development. With greater community involvement, we can ensure it remains a treasured resource for all. We encourage anyone interested to step forward and get involved.

10) Any other business

None

There being no further business the Chairman declared the Parish Meeting closed at 7.20 pm

Chairman

Date